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**Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia**

**“Review of U.S. Policy and Assistance Programs to Egypt”**

Thank you Madame Chairwoman, and other distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me here today. I welcome the opportunity to discuss U.S. policy and assistance programs to Egypt. Our strategic partnership with Egypt is one of the pillars of our foreign policy in the Middle East, and our military assistance is a key element of that strategic partnership.

Totaling \$1.3B in FMF and approximately \$1.2M in IMET funds each year, U.S. military assistance has helped to modernize the Egyptian military, creating a defense force that is interoperable with, and capable of supporting, U.S. security goals in the region. We will continue to work with Egypt to build their capacity to defeat terrorism, particularly after the most recent attacks on its territory.

We pursue an active dialogue with the Government of Egypt on the use of U.S. grant military assistance, both in political-military and Defense channels. In venues such as the bilateral military coordination committee meetings, we are able to talk constructively about the future of the Egyptian program. Political-Military Affairs Assistant Secretary John Hillen just returned from a trip to Egypt, where he engaged directly with Egyptian Ministry of Defense leadership on the topic of military assistance.

We agree with the overall premise of the recent GAO report that the FMF program in Egypt should be subject to periodic program level evaluations. In fact, we monitor the program on a constant basis to ensure that our overall strategic objectives are being met, and we are working on ways to improve our evaluations. As you are aware, Secretary Rice has begun the process of restructuring U.S. foreign assistance. One of the goals is to ensure that planning, budgeting and reporting set clear targets that directly contribute to U.S. policy goals. While some goals of our military assistance to Egypt are clearly more qualitative than quantitative, we are working within the State Department to define appropriate and meaningful benchmarks for this program. The Administration continues to support full funding for Egypt.

While much of our focus is necessarily on FMF, I would like to also say a few words about the IMET program in Egypt. IMET funds allow Egypt to send military officers to professional military education courses in the United States. Since 1995, over 6,600 Egyptian military students have participated in U.S.-based training, supported with FMF and IMET funds. IMET training goes beyond professional training. IMET funds support technical, maintenance, logistics, and specialist training which enables Egyptian military personnel to gain the skills needed to maintain Egypt's stocks of U.S.-origin equipment, as well as enhances their ability to participate with the U.S. as a training and coalition partner. Overall, it is clear that Egyptian attendance at U.S. training fosters mutual understanding, exposure to U.S. values, doctrines and concepts, and one-to-one relationships that ultimately improve U.S.-Egyptian military interoperability and capacity to perform, for example in international peacekeeping operations. Egyptian officers attending training at U.S. military schools learn about U.S. professional military organizations and procedures, how military organizations function under civilian control, about military justice systems, and the development of strong civil-military relations. These essential concepts and skills will contribute to Egypt's stability, and reinforce the concept of civilian rule.

U.S. military training is reinforced by joint exercises. Egypt continues to host CENTCOM's largest multinational military exercise – Bright Star. In 2005, Iraq and Afghanistan were invited to participate as observers to the exercise for the first time. Over 30,000 participants from 12 countries participated in Bright Star 2005.

Military assistance is critical to the development of a strategic partnership with Egypt and has contributed to a broad range of U.S. objectives in the region. Egyptian cooperation and assistance have supported numerous U.S. and international operations and foreign policy goals both in the Middle East and further abroad. Cooperation is increasing each year, and is often difficult to quantify in a single observation. Without going into too many details, I would like to briefly mention a few areas in which our partnership with Egypt has paid high dividends.

- First and foremost is Egypt's steadfast commitment to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Egypt has actively engaged with both parties, and recently worked with Israel to support the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip through the reorganization and training of the Palestinian security forces, and through the placement of border guards on the frontier with Gaza. Israeli officials have said publicly that they appreciate Egypt's efforts to secure the border and have also acknowledged the success of Egypt's counter-smuggling

operations. Following the inauguration of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority government, Egypt publicly called upon the new Palestinian leadership to accept the Quartet principles: recognize Israel, renounce violence, and respect previous agreements.

- Egypt's support to U.S. and coalition forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom has been invaluable and has included hundreds of expedited canal transits and thousands of clearances for aircraft overflights. For example, Egypt provides us immediate access to the Suez Canal, sending U.S. ships to the front of the queue and providing extra security at no cost during transits. This facilitation and cooperation to ensure the safe passage of our vessels is invaluable.
- In Afghanistan, Egypt donated 65 tons of humanitarian supplies and 16,000 weapons and associated ammunition to the Afghan National Army in 2003 and 2005. In 2006, Egypt sent two engineers to Bagram Air Base to assist with Afghan reconstruction efforts. In addition, Egypt has provided a crucial humanitarian service through the operation of a hospital at Bagram Air Base. Since the opening of the Egyptian Hospital in July 2003, Egyptian medical personnel have treated over 215,000 Afghan patients. The hospital is providing high quality and badly needed medical services to the local area around Bagram and currently treats approximately 300 patients per day. In addition to the direct provision of humanitarian care, the hospital staff is actively engaged in in-service training of Afghan medical personnel from the surrounding areas. They provide training and continuing mentoring in modern techniques such as CAT scanning, radiology, and maintenance of sterile environments.
- We have discussed before in this forum Egypt's strong efforts on behalf of the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq, by supporting the political process, endorsing the elections, ensuring Iraq's seat in the Arab League, hosting and interacting on a high-level with senior Iraqi officials, and training approximately 400 Iraqi police and soldiers and 25 Iraqi diplomats. Egypt's support has not been without cost. After Egypt took the bold step of being the first Arab nation to send an Ambassador to Iraq, the Egyptian Ambassador was assassinated in Baghdad in July 2005.
- Egypt recently has made efforts to ameliorate the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. Egypt sent a 800-person peacekeeping force to South Sudan, as well as an 18-person mobile medical team, which has treated over 250,000 patients, and

34 military observers and 50 police officers to Darfur. Egypt has also sent 22 C-130 plane loads of humanitarian goods to Sudan.

These are just several examples of the many benefits reaped by the provision of security assistance to Egypt – benefits that are felt as far away as Afghanistan and as near as the Sinai. These benefits illustrate that our assistance to Egypt contributes positively to U.S. goals in the region.

Thank you for your time. I would be pleased to address your questions.